

Report of Director of Children's Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 8th November 2012

**Subject: Foundation Years - providing the best start in life for children to succeed –
Session 3**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Summary of main issues

This report is to inform the third meeting of the Scrutiny Board of the inquiry into the foundation years (age 0- 5). The June meeting identified terms of reference around the inquiry. The September meeting considered the overview of services, existing provision, outcomes and any gaps in services. The meeting in October was around how services support and engage with families including Health and Social Care. The November meeting will consider evidence around personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; physical development; and the legislative changes around Early Years Foundation Stage and free take up of places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Board are asked to consider and note the contents of the report as part of their wider inquiry.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1** This report provides an overview to Children's Scrutiny Board of the key issues relating to supporting and engaging with families through the Leeds Education Challenge – Foundation Stage, Children's Services and Clusters.

2. Background information

- 2.1** Please see the attached reports:

Appendix 1

Leeds Education Challenge – Foundation Stage: Children's Services and Cluster approach to the three prime development areas:

- personal, social and emotional development
 - communication and language
 - physical development
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- Progress since the Education Standards – Entering the Education System inquiry 2009
 - Early Years Foundation Stage (Sept 2012) Legislation changes

Appendix 2

Free early education – take up of places for 3 and 4 year olds, increasing take up and engaging parents

Appendix 3

Leeds Education Challenge Board report for the 0-11 Partnership Board

Appendix 4

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2012: Summary of statistical first release

Appendix 5

Childminder analysis 2012

Appendix 6a and 6b

'Achieving two year olds' development plan

3. Main issues

The main issues to be considered are:

In 2012 Leeds is ranked equal 68th of 152 local authorities for the percentage achieving a good level of development, an improvement from equal 77th in 2011. However, for the gap indicator, despite improvements achieved in 2012, Leeds is ranked 142nd, the same rank as in 2011.

The requirement is to deliver enough two year old places to enable up to 5,000 children to take up their free entitlement by March 2015.

4. Corporate Considerations

To improve Leeds City Council's ranking in Early Years Foundation Stage results across the country.

To improve the "gap" between the most and least able children.

To ensure that all 2 year olds, especially those most vulnerable, are able to benefit from 15 hours of free early education entitlement.

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

A range of consultation and engagement is ongoing across all sectors of early education and childcare providers in the City. They are understanding of their role both in improving EYFS results and in narrowing the gap. There will be a further requirement for consultation with providers and stakeholders dependent on the findings of the report. There are established methods in place to undertake this work and to use their views to further inform the work.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

There are key areas of equality and diversity that will need full consideration in relation to issues raised. In particular where we have a gap in achievement some of our BME including GRT children have poor attainment rates and planning for narrowing the gap must take this into account.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

There are no immediate implication for council policy and governance.

4.4 Resources and value for money

The enquiry will inform what resources will be needed to deliver the desired outcomes. All services will be delivered with a view to the best possible value for money.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

None

4.6 Risk Management

The issues outlined in this inquiry highlight some of the potential risks in terms of wider city priorities, children attainment and development. The risks of not taking actions will be to disadvantage young children and their families, to increase the gap between the most and least able and to risk Leeds being further down the national league tables for EYFS.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1** This Scrutiny Board (Children and Families) inquiry into the foundation years will help to identify further investigation and next steps into narrowing the achievement gap, supporting the most vulnerable families more appropriately and achieve the vision for Leeds to become a Child Friendly City for all of its children. There is good progress in many areas to be built on and learned from. By identifying the needs of children at the earliest stage, even before birth, then the right services can be provided at the right time to break the cycle of disadvantage experienced by some families.

The inquiry will help to identify where services are working well together and promote this, and also identify gaps or areas where services are not fully co-ordinated.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1** Scrutiny Board are asked to consider and note the contents of the report.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1** Marmot, M., 2010, Fair Society Healthy Lives, executive summary

Allen, G., 2011, Early Intervention The Next Steps, executive summary

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.